

Good Morning; and thank you all for being here.

Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the dedicated group of elected officials who are here with us today. They include current, as well as past representatives who have served with distinction.

I would like first to acknowledge our skilled and committed federal representative and state delegation:

Congressman Jim McGovern

State Senator Pamela Resor,

Representative Stephen LeDuc,

and former Mayor of our City:

Michael Hogan

In addition, the individuals beside me who will be serving with me

for the next two years. I ask that they stand and be recognized as I call their names and I promise not to forget our at-large councilors this time:

Assabet Valley School Committee Member Joe Valarioti

School Committee Member Katie Robey

School Committee Member Mark Hediger

School Committee Member Michelle Bodin Hettinger

School Committee Member Robert Seymour

Incoming School Committee Member Margaret Dwyer

Incoming School Committee member Katherine Hennessey

Incoming Ward 1 City Councilor Joe Delano

Ward 2 City Councilor Paul Ferro

Ward 3 City Councilor Scott Schafer

Ward 4 City Councilor Peter Juairé

Ward 6 City Councilor Ed Clancy

Incoming Ward 7 City Councilor Don Landers

City Councilor-at-Large Steven Levy

City Councilor-at-Large Tricia Pope

City Councilor-at-Large Michael Ossing

City Councilor-at-Large Arthur Vigeant

I am honored to share this day with my colleagues, and those who have served our City with pride and integrity.

I would also like to express thanks on behalf of the residents of Marlborough to four individuals who, after years of service to our City, have moved on to other pursuits.

Ward 1 City Councilor Robert Katz

Ward 5 City Councilor Maura Navin Webster

Ward 7 City Councilor Richard Towle,

and School Committee member Cosmo Valente.

You will all be missed, and our City is a better place because of your contributions.

Two years ago, I stood at this podium to be sworn in as the first female Mayor in our City's rich history. I remarked on that particular occasion that making history alone would not improve our City. I said that we had to move forward together and begin to tackle the hard work that we faced collectively.

The task that we undertook was to work tirelessly to preserve Marlborough as a City which we are proud to call home. With each decision, we have an awesome and humbling responsibility. As

elected officials, we are the caretakers of the public's trust. We assume responsibility for the things that matter to everyone on a daily basis- are our streets safe? Are our schools educating our children? Are our resources and the taxpayer's money being used wisely and for the greater good of the community?

My colleagues in City government know now that I meant what I stated in January of 2006, that our duties can only be fulfilled by working collaboratively. Together, we have the opportunity to affect the quality of life for our neighbors on a daily basis and create a welcoming climate for the businesses that choose to operate in Marlborough.

We have often heard government officials use the words "collaboration, cooperation, communication, and mutual respect"; however, rarely do we see a group of individuals embody these principles, working tirelessly together for the public good, and putting aside politics and personal interests. But we did just that these last two years.

Each day, I rely on my colleagues in City government, who share my focus on service and not politics, to help me lead our City. It should come as no surprise to anyone who attends City Council meetings or watches on television that we do not always agree; often the methods to achieve a resolution differ, but our common goals are the same, and we all recognize Marlborough for what it is: a great place for us all to live, work, and raise a family.

It would be easy to overlook what has been accomplished in partnership since 2006. To those not involved regularly in City government, the municipal budget process may have seemed effortless. Unfortunately, what remained outside the public purview were the countless hours of diligent work required to produce a sound budget that resulted in the lowest percentage tax increase in recent memory. This accomplishment was the direct result of the collaborative efforts of my office, department heads and employees, the Finance Committee, and the City Council.

Although I believe we were successful in fulfilling our responsibility to the residents and businesses of Marlborough, we must not be content to stop there. We must avoid the complacency that comes with re-election and establish new and higher standards for the years to come. Today marks a continuation of the spirit of cooperation and communication in our City government that produced our past successes. We must keep this spirit in mind every day and continue to strive to make the politics that has, at times divided us, a relic of the past.

Two years ago, I asked my colleagues in City Government to assist me with an ambitious agenda for the first 100 days of my administration. Part of this agenda was to examine entrenched practices in our City and look for innovative strategies to improve our internal policies and procedures. Change is not always easy. In particular, I would like to recognize the efforts of City Council President Arthur Vigeant. Many of the positive developments in recent years would not have taken place without Councilor Vigeant's dedication to Marlborough.

The municipal department heads deserve commendation as well. We are fortunate to benefit from the talents of these dedicated men and women. I would like to ask all of the department heads who are in attendance today to stand and be recognized. Thank you for your dedication, commitment and support these last two years. It has been a pleasure to work with each and every one of you. Thank you!

Each year, our City faces new challenges, and the next two years will certainly provide us with our fair share of tests. Next year, the collective bargaining agreements with all unions representing our dedicated city employees will again be expiring. Our employees are the backbone of our City and I recognize their hard work. I wish that we had unlimited financial resources, I wish that raises and benefit packages were not something that had to be negotiated and reviewed. I wish I could just sign a piece of paper and make everyone happy. However, as Mayor, I am forced to live within the budget constraints that are a reality for our City and recognize that competing interests are always present. A proper

balance between the needs of our employees and Marlborough's taxpayers must be sought by continuing to do what is in the best interest of both.

Although we can't agree to any contract terms that our taxpayers cannot afford, we have to provide the resources necessary for department heads to operate their respective departments efficiently. Our employees must have the tools necessary to succeed. My job as Mayor is also to safeguard our employees for the long term, provide fair compensation, and protect them from unexpected and drastic increases in insurance costs. It's a delicate balance. This obligation extends beyond one contract term.

Labor contract negotiations are very difficult. The job of the union representatives is to advocate for their employee union members. My job as Mayor is to advocate for our City as a whole and its taxpayers, while providing for our employees upon whom we rely daily. All should recognize that, when negotiating any labor contract, each side is attempting to fulfill its fiduciary

responsibility, and given these often competing goals, some disagreement and controversy is unavoidable.

Without question, the single over-arching issue that we will continue to face together is the federally mandated upgrade of our wastewater treatment plants. When I took office, the City was faced with a decision which would have an impact upon taxpayers for many years to come. A choice to delay the inevitable projects by continuing the appeals or the withdrawal of the appeals and to work as soon as possible to fix costs, and take the matter head on needed to be made immediately. By being proactive and beginning the process of planning and financing for these upgrades, Marlborough was protected from potentially extreme increases in the cost of the federally mandated projects. Continuing with costly legal appeals, while allowing us additional time, would have only hampered our future growth and increased the final cost of the projects.

Our pro-active approach included dropping all pending appeals and focusing instead on being an effective and loud voice on both

the state and federal levels on behalf of, and in concert with, other communities in the Commonwealth which are facing similar circumstances. Together with other cities and towns we are seeking to improve the permitting process for communities acting responsibly and are working to draw attention to our common financial issues with legislators in both Boston and Washington. More importantly, we actively sought out every possible source of available funding for these mandated projects to lessen the impact on our taxpayers. Although this process is just beginning, we have been fortunate to have had some early successes. Our pro-active approach is working and I am proud to say that Marlborough has received an unprecedented \$10.3M in grants earmarked for this project. But, a great deal of hard work must still be completed. In the coming months, we will all be hearing more about this issue.

Marlborough has a rich history and a bright future. Much has improved in two years, and we are in the midst of important revitalization efforts. In one neighborhood of our City, 4 concurrent projects will change the character of the neighborhood

for the better. The Frye Boot lot, a contaminated parcel that sat vacant for years, is well on its way to being transformed into Christopher Heights-a new assisted living facility at the corner of Pleasant and Chestnut Streets slated for completion in March of this year. The old Wire Goods building is being transformed into the Renaissance Lofts and, as part of this project, the Highland House was torn down. The Armory building is in the early stages of redevelopment while construction has commenced at the old St. Mary's property which will ultimately provide new housing options. This ongoing revitalization of an older, established Marlborough neighborhood is a continuation of our Downtown revitalization work and the first concrete manifestations of our redevelopment efforts.

We now have the essential pieces in place to make important strides in our Downtown revitalization initiatives. Marlborough 2010 Corporation is up and running and we have a new executive director in place at the Community Development Authority. A master plan for downtown revitalization, which focuses on the

neighborhoods within walking distance of our central downtown district, is in process. Part of this plan, subsequent to the recent sale and redevelopment of the Olde Central Fire Station, is underway. Revitalization spurs redevelopment, and the momentum has started to build. Our job going forward is to create the environment that will foster this growth and the essential components of our long range plan.

No master outline for the redevelopment of our Downtown district would be complete without addressing the City's use and ownership of the Walker Building. This beautiful building is part of our City's history, but its age means that we must examine our current use and decide whether the City wants to continue to be a landlord and finance the daily maintenance and necessary repairs and upgrades, or whether we need to consider selling the property to a private developer. Continued ownership of the building will necessitate significant maintenance issues for the City. In the end, after exploring options, a decision may be made not to make any changes to current use of the property; however, we must pursue

these reviews and continue to ask the difficult questions. Recently, a local college expressed interest in using the Walker Building for its evening instructional program. This could be a very positive development for the City, but in order to move in that direction, a long term plan must be developed for the property.

Code enforcement is an integral part of any downtown revitalization plan. Those who seek to invest in revitalization projects or consider establishing a home at one of our new housing developments must be confident that Marlborough will enforce its City Codes, especially those that are designed to protect quality of life. Marlborough must continue to combat illegal apartments, overcrowding, blight, and other elements that detract from our neighborhoods. It has become increasingly obvious, as the City has stepped up its enforcement efforts, that one person alone cannot 96handle all of the City's enforcement issues. Later this month, I will be asking the City Council to support additional personnel for the City's Code enforcement team.

Also in keeping with efforts to preserve and improve the quality of life in our City, we also need to address some public safety matters. Last year, we re-established our community policing program. Familiarity with the neighborhoods and residents that results from active community policing benefits both the residents and the police officers who are then better able to identify issues in need of attention. The next step to improving the manner in which our police officers serve residents is to restore our traffic enforcement team. The necessities of budget issues resulted in the termination of this program. In the coming weeks, I will be teaming up with Chief Leonard to formulate a workable plan for restoring this vital policing program and addressing residents concerns.

To my friends on the City Council, I applaud you for a job well done last term. I realize that it will be difficult for us to repeat the success that we enjoyed, but I can assure you and the taxpayers of our City that, every day, the City will receive my best efforts to see that the next two years are equally as prosperous.

I would like to conclude, as I did two years ago, by reflecting on what makes Marlborough a place that we are proud to call home. We have rich history and the best of community traditions. We value our seniors, our education system, and the best of neighbors. In short, we have a community that we all value. We want you to be proud of how your City is led and run. Making a difference in our community, however, is not limited to those elected officials with whom I am joined on this stage. Every resident can make a difference. Pick something you care about, something that touches your life every day- volunteer in the schools, join a neighborhood group, help at the food pantry or the senior center, coach a youth sport team. Be a good neighbor and responsible citizen- increase your recycling, grab the trash floating around your street, shovel your sidewalk, help a neighbor dig their car out, check on a senior during the hottest days of summer or the coldest days of winter. No contribution is too small. Perhaps your business may wish to establish or increase donations of supplies to the schools or other community organizations. Every contribution

of time or effort is valued and continues our community's tradition of giving back to the City that we are proud to call home. I ask that in the coming years, we all seek opportunities to continue this tradition. I know that many of you here today already do your fair share. Some of you may not know how you can help. To you I say -ASK. Ask your City Councilor, ask your neighbors, ask me.

I challenge all of you here today to make this the year you become involved in something new in the community. What will you do to make Marlborough a better place?

Thank you to my family and friends for your love and encouragement. Thank you all for your support and for placing your confidence in me. I look forward to serving you these next two years. I look forward to making this city the very best it can be.